

TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No: 2.1
29 APRIL 2020	PUBLIC REPORT

TRANSPORT IMPACTS OF COVID-19

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1. To consider the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the transport network of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and to make recommendations to the Combined Authority Board on how the Authority can maximise the opportunities that may arise following end of the pandemic.

<u>DECISION REQUIRED</u>	
Lead Member:	Mayor James Palmer
Lead Officer:	Paul Raynes
Forward Plan Ref:	Key Decision: No
<p>The Transport and Infrastructure Committee is recommended to:</p> <p>(a) Consider the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and give officers guidance on how the Authority should approach the transport opportunities and challenges that may arise following the end of the current lockdown.</p>	<p>Voting arrangements</p> <p>Simple majority of all Members</p>

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1. This paper discusses the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on travel patterns, with a view to understanding the risks and opportunities the coming recovery phase may present for the achievement of the Combined Authority's aim as set out in the Local Transport Plan (LTP), including for carbon reduction, air quality and modal shift.

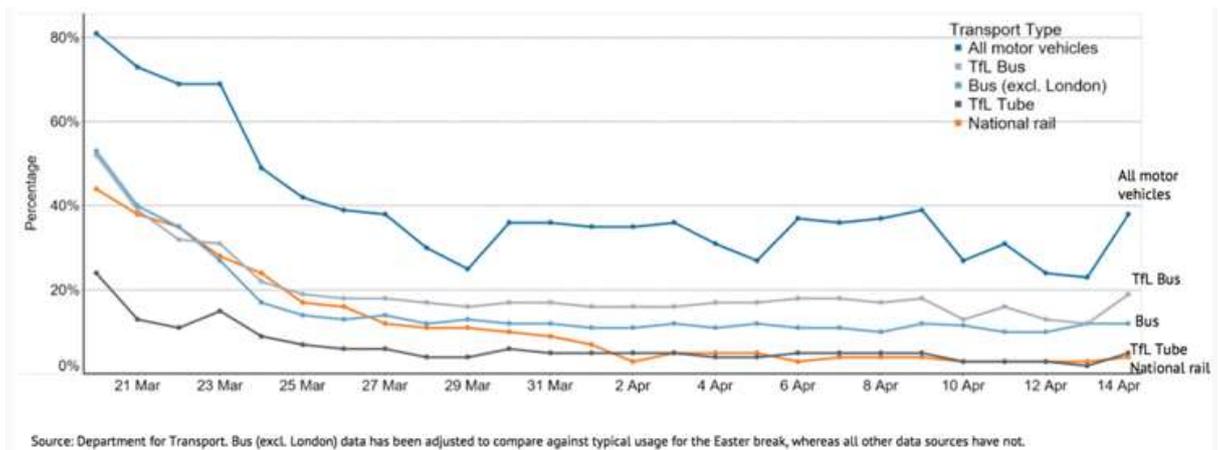
COVID-19 impacts on transport – global and national changes

2.2. The impacts of the pandemic have been felt worldwide. The Global Carbon Project, which produces widely watched annual emissions estimates, has stated that carbon dioxide output could fall by more than 5% year-on-year (globally).

2.3. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the transport network has been significant. Nationally, traffic flows have reduced by 73% compared with pre-outbreak levels, with rail travel having decreased by 90%. Tube and bus journeys in London down by 94% and 83% respectively.

2.4. All travel has decreased significantly in urban areas, with walking, cycling, van and car journeys all down by approximately three-quarters, whilst bus numbers have fallen by 60%. The number of large lorries has declined by 40% as essential supplies continue to be transported.

2.5. Detailed data from Vivacity, a video analysis company, shows that pedestrian, bicycle and car journeys in urban areas started falling a few days after the Government announced it was moving from the contain to the delay phase of its pandemic response on 12th March. Bus, van and large HGV trips started falling later, after Boris Johnson announced a national lockdown on 23rd March.



2.6. Traffic deaths and injuries are likely to have fallen significantly as a result, but data is not yet available. Noise pollution, which is also known to have adverse

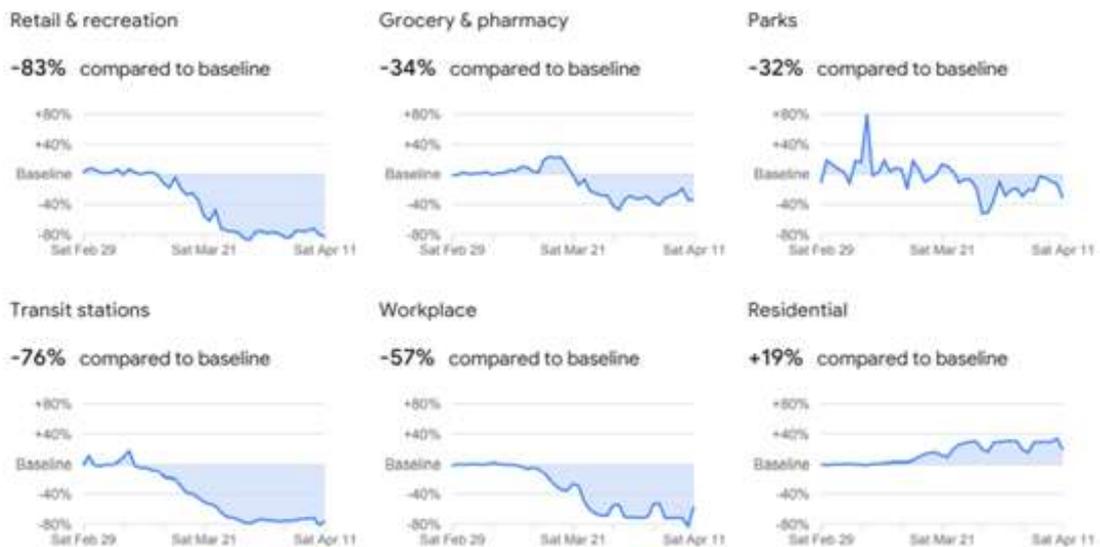
effects on human health, is down, and the quieter streets have encouraged wildlife to venture into some towns.

- 2.7. Some scientists have suggested that the number of early deaths avoided due to cleaner air might potentially outnumber the deaths from coronavirus. As a direct consequence of a decrease in traffic volumes, there has been a significant reduction in air pollution across the UK's major cities. Levels of toxic pollutants were likely to fall even further, as traffic remained off the roads but prevailing westerly winds from the Atlantic returned. Current easterly winds are bringing additional pollution from continental Europe to Britain. The data shows drops in tiny particle pollution of a third to a half in London, Birmingham, Bristol and Cardiff (changes in levels within Cambridge and Peterborough being sought). For nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) pollution, the data also shows declines of a third to a half in London, Birmingham, Bristol and Cardiff, and drops of 10-20% in the other cities.

COVID-19 impacts on transport – locally

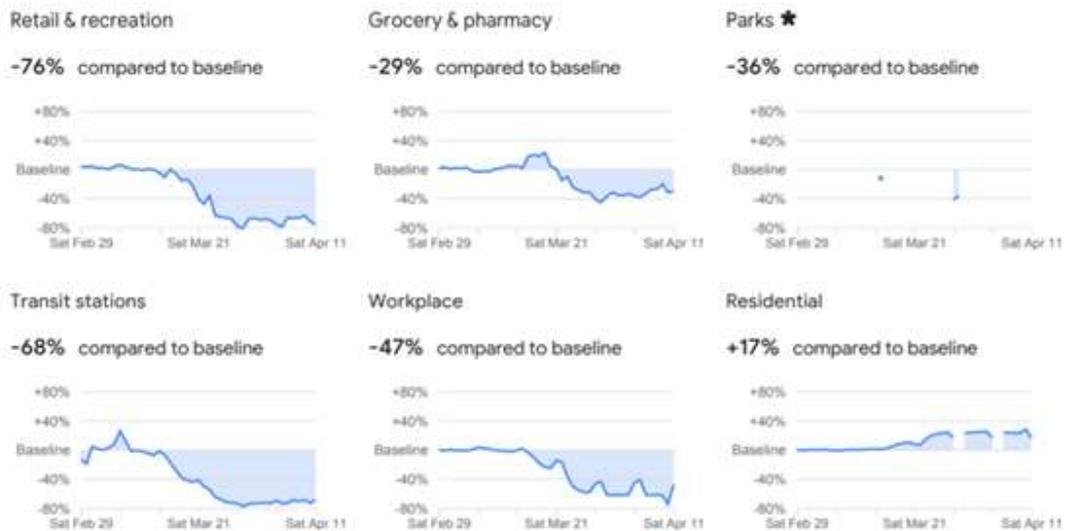
- 2.8. The following two diagrams show the impact that COVID-19 has had on the transport networks in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The information below is provided by Google's Mobility Reports that chart movement trends over time by geography, across different categories of places such as retail and recreation, groceries and pharmacies, parks, transit stations, workplaces, and residential (* correct as of 21st April – latest report).

Cambridgeshire



* **Not enough data for this date:** Currently, there is not enough data to provide a complete analysis of this place. Google needs a significant volume of data to generate an aggregated and anonymous view of trends.

Peterborough



* **Not enough data for this date:** Currently, there is not enough data to provide a complete analysis of this place. Google needs a significant volume of data to generate an aggregated and anonymous view of trends.

- 2.9. The lockdown has had a very significant impact on public transport operators. Patronage on buses is down some 90% within the Authority area. The operators have reduced services in response with about half the normal level of bus services have been running.
- 2.10. This means that the providers have faced greater reductions in fare income than their ability to cut costs. Bus companies have significant fixed costs and do not benefit from the government's rate relief scheme. The position of smaller firms is likely to be particularly challenging.
- 2.11. The Mayor raised the challenges of the local bus sector in conversations with the Secretary of State for Transport and the Buses Minister, Baroness Vere. He made specific proposals for providing targeted assistance to Ministers on 26 March. On 4 April, the government announced a package of support for the bus industry. The majority of this support will be provided directly, but the Combined Authority will distribute a proportion of the funding. Officers estimate that Cambridge and Peterborough bus firms will receive some £5 million over 12 weeks as a result of this package. Within that total, some £275,000 will be distributed by the Combined Authority.
- 2.12. The Mayor also raised with Ministers the position of school transport providers. Subsequently, government guidance made it clear that contracts with school transport providers should be honoured in full for the coming term, even if schools remain shut. Cambridgeshire County Council have confirmed that this will be their approach.
- 2.13. As the Transport Authority, it is important that the Authority continues to work with CCC and PCC as Highway Authorities and other key stakeholders and

partners to maximise the transformational benefits to the region's transport network that may emerge following the end of the pandemic.

Questions to consider

- 2.14. The Committee will receive a presentation at the meeting based on up to date information that sets out questions about the potential risks and opportunities in the COVID-19 recovery for achieving the LTP policy objectives.

SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations made for decision in this report. However, depending on the recommended opportunities pursued as a consequence it maybe that this will impact on future spends to meet the demands of the overarching strategy.

4.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. Article 8 of the Peterborough and Cambridgeshire Combined Authority Order 2017 (SI 2017 No.251) confirmed the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority as the Local Transport Authority for its area. Under Article 8 (a) of the 2017 Order the Combined Authority assumed powers and duties contained within parts 4 and 5 of the Transport Act 1985, and under Article 8 (b) Part 2 of the Transport Act 2000 (as amended), which included the duty to produce a LTP.
- 4.2. The purpose of the LTP and subsequent strategies is to develop policies for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport (s.108 Transport Act 2000 as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008).
- 4.3. Developing a LTP is a duty of the Combined Authority by way of section 9 of the Local Transport Act 2008.

5.0 OTHER SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. None

6.0 APPENDICES

- 6.1. None

